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ABSTRACT

The first section of this fact sheet reports that: from 1989 through the year 2000, two out of three new entrants into the work force will be women; in 1988, two-thirds of all women with children under 18 were in the work force; nearly 90 percent of jobs created between now and 2000 will be in the service sector; and part-time or temporary employment will comprise an increasing share of available jobs. These facts regarding education and training are presented: a majority of all new jobs will require education or training beyond high school; one in eight women workers has a less than high school education; and females continue to be disproportionately enrolled in education and training that prepares them for low-wage jobs in traditional female occupations. Examples are then provided of actions being taken to meet the challenge of preparing for a changing work force by businesses, unions, educators, and community-based organizations. The fact sheet suggests that public policy can improve the economic status of women and families. It describes briefly federal legislative initiatives in these areas: family and career support policies, education and training policies, and income and benefits policies. (YLB)

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Women, Work and the Future

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Workforce 2000

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From 1989 through the year 2000, two out of three new entrants to the labor force will be women.

• By 2000, it is projected that 80% of women ages 25-54 will be in the work force. Women will comprise nearly half (47%) of the paid labor force, compared with 39% in 1972.

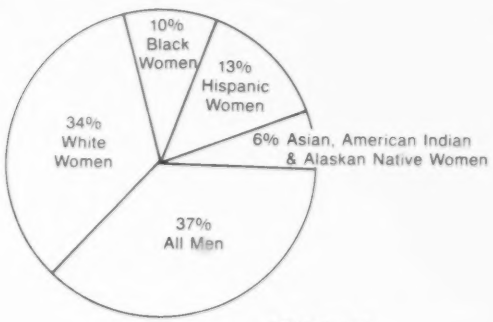
Between now and 2000:

• the number of Hispanic women in the labor force will increase dramatically, by 85% (from 3.1 million to 5.8 million women).

• Black women will increase their number in the labor force by 33%, to make up 6.1% of the total labor force.

• 1 in 10 new women entrants to the labor force will be Asian, American Indian and Alaskan native women.

New Entrants to the Labor Force, 1986–2000



SOURCE: BLS

In 1988, two-thirds of all women with children under 18 were in the labor force.

• More than half (51%) of mothers of infants are returning to work within the baby's first year.

• 53% of mothers with children under age 3 are in the labor force.

• 25% of mothers of pre-schoolers who are not in the paid work force say they would work if they had access to safe and affordable child care.

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Nearly 90% of jobs created between now and the year 2000 will be in the service sector.

• The low-wage, sex-segregated "pink collar ghetto" in which the majority of women work will be reinforced by the shift to a service sector economy.

• 5 of the 11 occupations projected to create the largest number of new jobs over the next decade are now female-dominated occupations, with median weekly wages below poverty level.

(Note: 1987 poverty-level income for a family of 4 was $11,611 or approximately $223 per week.)

Occupation	# jobs to be created 1986-2000	1987 % Female	1987 median weekly female wages
Retail Sales	1,200,000	68.5	$192
Waitress	752,000	85.1	$178
Cashier	575,000	83.0	$183
Food Worker	449,000	78.5	$149
Nursing Aide	443,000	90.4	$212

Part-time or temporary employment will comprise an increasing share of available jobs.

• More than 25% of women workers work part-time; part-time workers average only 59% of the hourly earnings of full-time workers.

• 62% of temporary workers are women.

• Part-time and temporary jobs typically provide few or no benefits, limited job security, lower wages and few opportunities for advancement.

Sources for this Fact Sheet:

Hudson Institute, *Workforce 2000*
Bureau of Labor Statistics
Census Bureau
U.S. Department of Labor
U.S. Department of Education
U.S. Senate Budget Committee
American Society for Training and Development
Project on the Status and Education of Women (Association of American Colleges)

Researched and written by Jennifer Watson January 1989

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Women, Work and the Future

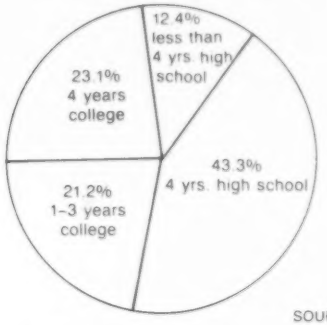
Education and Training

For the first time in history, a majority of all new jobs will require education or training beyond high school.

- 56% of women ages 25-54 now in the labor force have only a high school education or less.
- By the year 2000, people with less than a high school education will be able to fill only 14% of all jobs.

One in eight women workers has less than a high school education.

Educational Attainment of Women in the Labor Force, 1988



SOURCE: BLS

- 1 in 2 single mothers has less than a high school education.
- 56% of displaced homemakers have less than a high school education.
- 1 in 3 Hispanic women workers has less than a high school education.
- 1 in 5 Black women workers has less than a high school education.

Women and girls continue to be disproportionately enrolled in education and training that prepares them for low-wage jobs in traditional female occupations.

- 70% of female secondary vocational school students are enrolled in programs leading to traditional female jobs.
- The educational choices of boys and girls indicate that occupational segregation by sex will continue well into the 21st century.
- 77% of women workers are employed in female-dominated occupations.
- 43% of women workers are currently in jobs that pay below poverty-level wages, compared to only 27% of men.
- 2 of every 3 minimum wage earners are female.
- Women workers, employed full-time, year-round, earn 65 cents for each dollar earned by men.

Federally funded education and training programs do not adequately meet the specific needs of women.

- The Adult Education Act and the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) do not provide adequate support services to enable women to participate fully in literacy and job training programs.
- The majority of women enrolled in JTPA programs are trained for female-dominated, low-wage clerical and service jobs.

LITERACY NEEDS FOR THE FUTURE WORK FORCE

- good basic skills in reading, writing and mathematics
- higher order and critical thinking skills
- analytical and problem-solving skills
- communication skills
- basic computer skills
- teamwork skills

Women, Work and the Future

Meeting the Challenge

Businesses, unions, educators and community organizations are beginning to recognize the importance of preparing for a changing work force. The following are examples of actions being taken to meet the challenge.

BUSINESS

- Partnerships with education, government, community groups and unions for worker education and training
- Workplace literacy and basic skills training programs
- Affirmative action, targeted recruitment and training efforts
- "Managing diversity," sensitivity to cultural differences in the workplace
- Educational tuition aid
- Job evaluation to eliminate sex-based wage discrimination
- Flexible scheduling policies: flex-time, part-time, parental leave, sick child leave
- "Cafeteria"-style flexible benefit plans
- Child care and elder care as benefits
- Sexual harassment policies, including organization-wide training

UNIONS

- Bargaining around issues of pay equity, child care, parental leave, flex-time, benefits and job security
- Organizing service sector workers, particularly female office and clerical workers
- Employee development and training programs, in cooperation with management
- Dislocated worker re-training programs

EDUCATION

- Partnerships with business and community groups to carry out projects on workplace literacy, drop-out prevention, academic incentives, teen parents and education for employment
- Sex equity programs in vocational education
- Joint remediation programs for parents and children
- School-based cooperative programs, combining academic skills with work skills training
- Bilingual education

COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATIONS

- Public education, organizing and advocacy on issues of concern to working women
- Basic skills and literacy training
- Integration of literacy skills and employment training
- Comprehensive support services provision
- Nontraditional skills training
- Creation of employment and training program models
- Programs to upgrade skills
- Employment placement

RACISM AND SEXISM

Black, Hispanic and Asian women are particularly at risk in the workplace. These women suffer the consequences of race and ethnic discrimination in addition to sex discrimination. Many are victims of inadequate education, economic hardship and overall lack of advantage. Many have language barriers. Solutions will be needed which specifically address the impact of multiple discrimination.

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Public Policy for Working Women

Public policy can improve the economic status of women and families. The following are federal legislative initiatives. Many states have also acted to implement these policies.

FAMILY AND CAREER SUPPORT POLICIES

• **Family and Medical Leave**: mandates unpaid leave for workers for birth, adoption, or illness of a parent or child and unpaid medical leave for personal reasons.

• **Child Care**: increases the supply, subsidizes the cost and improves the quality of child care for low- and moderate-income families, as well as providing training for day care workers.

• **Long-Term Care:** provides long-term care for the elderly, including provision for adult day care.

EDUCATION AND TRAINING POLICIES

• **Carl Perkins Vocational Education Act**: includes specific funding set-asides for sex equity and programs to serve single parents and homemakers.

• **Job Training Partnership Act**: provides for job training services to youth and economically disadvantaged individuals.

• **Family Support Act**: the new welfare law includes the JOBS employment and training program for welfare recipients.

• **Adult Education Act**: includes provisions for workplace literacy and partnerships between business and community-based organizations.

INCOME AND BENEFITS POLICIES

• **Minimum Wage Restoration**: raises the minimum wage in increments over a period of years and establishes a Minimum Wage Review Board.

• **Pay Equity**: requires the executive branch to conduct a pay equity study and to promote techniques to eliminate sex- and race-based wage discrimination.

• **Part-Time and Temporary Workers Protection**: provides part-time and temporary workers a *pro rata* share of pension and health insurance benefits.

• **Minimum Health Benefits:** mandates employers of a certain size or greater to provide minimum health insurance coverage for employees.

About WOW: Wider Opportunities for Women (WOW) works nationally to achieve economic independence and equality of opportunity for women and girls. For 25 years, WOW has been at the forefront of women's employment issues. WOW leads a national network of more than 400 independent women's employment programs and advocates in 48 states. Each year, WOW's network serves more than a quarter of a million women seeking employment information, counseling, training and jobs.

About the Commission: The National Commission on Working Women was created to focus on the needs and concerns of the approximately 80% of women in the work force who are concentrated in low-paying, low-status jobs in service industries, clerical occupations, retail stores, factories and plants. In January, 1987, NCWW merged with Wider Opportunities for Women, Inc.

The NCWW encourages broad distribution of this fact sheet. Those interested in reproducing it are simply required to inform our office.
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